

# **Benefits, Uses and Markets for Compost**

## Slide 1

### **Iowa Compost Initiative**

A 2 year educational/promotional effort, funded by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to raise the awareness and use of locally produced compost products.

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US Composting Council - [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)

## Slide 2

# Selling the Benefits of Compost Use

### **Physical:**

- Improves soil structure
- Moisture management

### **Chemical:**

- Modifies and stabilizes pH
- Increases cation exchange capacity
- Supplies nutrients

### **Biological:**

- Supplies soil biota
- Suppresses plant diseases

### **Other:**

- Binds/degrades contaminants
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## Slide 3

## Perceived Market Value and Segment Acceptance – *Your Sales Priorities!*

- Blended Topsoil Component
- Soil Amendment for Turf and for Planting Beds
- Planting Backfill Mix Component
- Soil Mulch for Erosion Control
- Soil Amendment for Field Nursery Production
- Horticultural Growing Media Component
- Soil Amendment for Marginal Soils/Reclamation
- High value/ high acceptance
- High value/low acceptance
- Low value/high acceptance

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### Slide 4

## Compost Customers - Perceived Market Value and Segment Acceptance

- Landscape Suppliers - ALL
- Garden Centers – focus on bulk products
- Landscapers – commercial and residential
- Topsoil Suppliers – commercial and retail
- Retail – Homeowners, packaged product?
- DOT's/Public Works – local and state
- Greenhouses and Nurseries – may need mixes
- Golf Courses and Athletic Fields – may need mixes
- Organic Farmers – product specific
- Land Reclamation – timing!

### Slide 5

# Compost Use in Landscaping

## Your #1 Direct Use Market Segment

Landscapers will buy compost directly  
Landscapers will buy compost indirectly  
Landscapers will buy straight compost  
Landscapers will buy compost topsoil mixes  
Landscapers will serve as subcontractors  
for most construction projects:  
commercial, residential, public works,  
highway, etc.

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## Compost for Turf Establishment and Maintenance

Grass will be the single largest crop grown,  
covering the most acres in compost amended  
soil

PERIOD

*Landscapers will plant most of this grass!*

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# Professional Growers Greenhouses and Nurseries

Proceed SLOWLY and CAUTIOUSLY!

- VERY conservative market segment
- Most expensive legal crop/acre grown
  - Compost product must be VERY consistent, even if it's consistently bad!
- Start small – 10% - 15% by volume
- 1 failure will undo 100 successes!

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## Specifiers – the master key to increased sales!

- Specifiers are primarily landscape architects, landscape designers and consulting engineers
- You need a large, consistent supply
- They dictate what is used on landscape projects
- They work for commercial projects, DOTs and residential projects
- If it ain't in the specs, it may not be used!

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# What compost isn't?

- it isn't black gold
- customers will not be lining up with money in hand
- build it and they will come – NOT
- the environment is nice, but the bottom line is nicer!
- You **MUST** educate your prospects and **SELL** you facility and product!

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Slide 10

**Iowa Water Summit - November 2002**

**Vision Statement:**

**Make Iowa a national center of expertise  
for clean water and a recognized leader  
for watershed restoration**

***Increasing compost use can help  
this happen!***

**Use this in your selling!**

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# Sell, sell, sell your ?????

## Give your compost a brand name!

Sales leads are EVERYWHERE. Find them in:

- The phone book
- Through trade organizations (IA NLA, IA Turfgrass, IA ASLA, etc.)
- Networking in the community

Advertise, promote and spread the word through EVERY means possible. Be Creative. You don't have to spend lots of \$\$\$\$\$